



# Oil Spill Program Update

The U.S. EPA's Oil Program Center Report

## ABOUT THE UPDATE

EPA's *Oil Spill Program Update* is produced quarterly, using information provided by EPA Regional staff, and in accordance with Regions' information needs. The goal of the Update is to provide straight-forward information to keep EPA Regional staff, other federal agencies and departments, industries and businesses, and the regulated community current with the latest developments. The Update is distributed in hard copy and is available on the Oil Program homepage at [www.epa.gov/oilspill](http://www.epa.gov/oilspill).

## Region 5 Oil Section Activities

US EPA Region 5 has been EPA's lead region for oil spill activities for the past four years. In its leadership role the region co-chaired monthly program conference calls, facilitated development of the agenda for and led the national oil spill program meetings, and acted as an advocate for all ten regional oil spill programs. This year, leadership has shifted to Region 1 but Region 5 remains dedicated to the task of preventing, preparing for, and responding to spills.

Region 5 encompasses the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Its home office is located in Chicago, Illinois, and it has satellite offices in Grosse Ile, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio;

Cincinnati, Ohio; and Marion, Illinois. The region is bounded by the Great Lakes, and The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and is covered by the prairie and farmland, and dotted with industry. The Region 5 office is the largest of the EPA regional offices with approximately 1500 employees. The Region 5 Oil Section resides within the Superfund Division. The Oil Section has 10 employees that perform a variety of duties such as planning, SPCC inspections, training, conducting exercises, and responding to emergencies. The following is an example of the work that is taking place in Region 5.

### *Oil Removals*

Region 5 conducts several oil removals throughout the year. Most of these removals are at old and abandoned oil facilities that are leaking product into nearby waterways. The

following is an example of a typical removal site.

The Dillman Oil Recovery Site was an abandoned oil recovery facility located in the Village of Stoy, Illinois. The site was initially used for oil storage, having been constructed around 1911. Different generations of activities subsequently occurred at the site prior to its abandonment, one of which was the distillation of usable oil from heavy tank bottoms obtained from oil producers in the area. A responsible party was not identified.

The site was approximately 1,500 feet from Bennett Creek,

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which ultimately discharges into the Embarras River approximately seven miles downstream. Approximately 410,000 gallons of oily sludge was contained on the site in 27 tanks that were in a general state of disrepair. In addition, a mix of oil and oily sludge was present in at least 8 pits holding an estimated 8200 cubic feet of material.

Removal actions began with the sampling of tank and pit contents, and removal of brush and trees that obscured and restricted access to site structures. Tanks were emptied of all pumpable liquid, leaving only the tank bottom sludge. The oil sludge from the tanks and the pits was mixed with fly ash, stockpiled and then sent to a local landfill as a non-special waste. All 27 tanks were then cut up and sold for scrap; the money was used to offset the cost of this removal.

Approximately 31,000 tons of stabilized oil sludge and oil-

contaminated soil were transported off-site for disposal. The site was graded for drainage and seeded with a mixture of rye and fescue grasses. The Dillman Oil Recovery cleanup took approximately 5 months and cost about \$1.6 million.

### ***U.S. EPA Sub-Area Plan Status***

Region 5 is also responsible for area planning activities that outline emergency response procedures, and identify sensitive resource areas and response tools and personnel specific to a given area. Region 5 combines its area contingency plan with its regional contingency plan (which is required under the National Contingency Plan). Because Region 5 is highly concentrated with people, industry, and resources, it has divided the region into sub-areas. In Region 5 there are 20 sub-areas with planning committees that are chaired by an on-scene coordinator (OSC). Currently, most of the major metropolitan areas in Region 5 are being served by sub-areas as are all of its water boundaries.

Over half of the OSC's in Region 5 participate in area planning. These OSC's are assigned or volunteer for an area and chair the meetings and assist in writing plans. The plans for Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota; The Quad Cities

(Region 7 lead); Detroit, Michigan; and the Upper Mississippi River have been completed. The plans for Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio are out in draft and available for comment. The plans for Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Duluth/Superior, Minnesota; Huntington, West Virginia (Region 3 lead), and Milwaukee, Wisconsin are under development. Region 5 has recently added sub-areas in Indianapolis, Indiana; Peoria, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio and the Red River (with Region 8).

### ***One County In Planning***

In order to limit the burden on local and state governments, to address the complexity of multiple jurisdictions, and to most efficiently use government resources, the U.S. Coast Guard District 9 and the U.S. EPA Region 5 have developed the One County In Planning strategy for the Great Lakes.

This strategy uses one plan to address an entire county that borders a Great Lake rather than just a piece of a county. Counties are grouped for planning purposes, according to the USCG Captain of the Port Zones which are centered at major ports/metropolitan areas. Where one county does not fully include the metropolitan area of a municipality, there is flexibility to include other

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counties as appropriate at the discretion of the area committee. This provides a planning group that addresses the full area of the local jurisdiction and allows the EPA and USCG to leverage their resources to come up with a better plan for everyone.

Currently, the One County In Planning process includes the major metropolitan areas of Chicago, Detroit, Duluth/Superior, Gary, Green Bay, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Toledo, along with many other smaller industrial centers. This planning process includes approximately 80 counties.

### ***Inland Waterways Spill Response Atlases***

Region 5 is meeting the mandate to identify economically and environmentally important areas by collecting data and making it available on paper maps, and by storing it electronically in a

geographical information system and making it available on

digital compact discs and the Internet. These spill response atlases will map all of the essential layers identified by EPA headquarters. The region's approach is to collect and improve the data for one area, complete it and then move on to other areas. The first priority is the sub-areas designated for area planning. The spill response atlases will eventually cover the entire region at the 1:24,000 scale.

Maps for the Minneapolis/St. Paul sub-area and the Western Lake Erie sub-area are completed and can be found on the Region 5 Oil Section web site (see below). Four other sub-areas are finished but await the approval from State Heritage data managers. Several other maps are in draft and will be available shortly. All of the atlases will be made available on the Oil Section web site and are available on CD upon request.

### ***Web Site***

The Region 5 Oil Section recently completed its web site ([www.epa.gov/region5/oil/](http://www.epa.gov/region5/oil/)). The Region 5 area plan and completed sub area plans, spill response atlases and other pertinent information pertaining to inspections and drills are available on this site. You can contact Region 5 through the web site. They welcome comments regarding the site and questions about oil program activities in Region 5.

### ***Unannounced Exercises***

Region 5 will conduct 12 unannounced Oil Pollution Act exercises throughout calendar year 1999, two in each state in Region 5. All the facilities in a county where exercises will be conducted are notified that Region 5 personnel will be visiting the area during a certain week. Although not all facilities will be visited, the notification allows them all to prepare for the possibility of participating in the exercise. Exercises last approximately four hours. EPA typically requests that the facility deploy its emergency response equipment during an exercise. EPA provides an exercise critique to the facility.

Region 5 is happy to extend its knowledge and expertise to our industry partners. If you are located in the region and need any assistance from the EPA



regarding oil programs, please feel free to contact Region 5 through its web site.

## EPA Region 1 Assumes Oil Spill Program Leadership

Region 1 became the lead region for the Oil Spill Program in October 1998, coinciding with its role as the lead region for Superfund. Its role as lead region will last two years. Responsibilities of the lead region for the Oil Spill Program include co-chairing the monthly program conference call, helping develop the agenda for and lead the national Oil Spill Program meetings, and acting as an advocate for all ten regional oil spill programs on issues such as resources.

Region 1 has been active in promoting awareness of oil spill issues. The Regional Response Team (RRT) has developed several informational brochures covering the following topics:

- In-Situ Burning in Oil Spill Response;
- Dispersants in Oil Spill Response;
- Mechanical Containment and Recovery of Spilled Oil;
- Oil Spill Response Planning and Spill Response Roles;
- Oil Spill Prevention Planning and Response Measures;

- The Incident Command System in Oil Spill Response;
- Oil Spill Shoreline Assessment and Shoreline Cleanup; and
- Marine Oil Spill Prevention.

The brochures provide brief descriptions of the issues involved for each of these topics and offer contact numbers, references and sources of additional information for those interested in learning more about oil spill planning, prevention, and response activities in Region 1. These brochures are available on the Region 1 RRT web site. The address is [www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/rrt/rrt1.html](http://www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/rrt/rrt1.html).

For more information on Region 1 activities, call (617) 918-1260, or write 1 Congress Street, Suite 1100 (HBR), Boston, MA 02114-2023. For oil spill emergencies, Region 1 staff can be reached 24 hours a day at (617) 223-7265.

## Oil Spill Prevention and the Millennium Bug



As the year 2000 approaches, the computer programming glitch known as the

Millennium Bug or the Y2K problem is getting increasing attention. The propensity to abbreviate gives us phrases like Y2K, a shorthand method of expressing the year 2000; this is a fitting name for a problem that results from expressing a four-digit year in two-digit form, such as '99 for 1999. This two-digit year representation is at the heart of the Y2K problem. When assembled, many computerized systems were programmed to read only a two-digit year representation, not accounting for the fact that when a century rolls over to the next, the first two digits of the four-digit year change as well. Precisely at midnight on January 1, 2000, many computerized systems will read the year 2000 as 1900. However, other dates may also be affected by two-digit year representation. (See table on page 6.)

Why is the Y2K problem a problem? In short, any system that is electronically operated may cease to function properly or at all. Systems may read the year 2000 as 1900, setting back operations schedules by 100 years or systems may not recognize the "00" year representation at all and become "confused", thus leading to malfunctions, including complete system shutdowns.

Y2K may affect the environment in a number of ways. Monitoring facilities may stop

The Environmental Defense Fund recently issued an assessment of safety hazards that might result from Y2K failures—and some opportunities for organizations confronting the potential problems. Y2K failures could affect emissions sampling and related laboratory analyses, pollution treatment systems, leak detection systems, safety alarms, safety relief devices, security systems (which could lock out critical personnel), and power and water surge detection systems.

| POTENTIAL PROBLEM   | POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY   |
|---|---|
| Accidental release of oil or hazardous materials, caused by a power interruption and/or by multiple plant systems that are not Y2K-compliant.   | Identifying and implementing solutions to Y2K problems can incorporate measures to enhance plant safety and environmental protection, including reducing the use of dangerous (including toxic, flammable, and reactive) chemicals and decreasing process pressures and temperatures. |
| Gas or oil pipeline accidental release due to pressure buildup caused by the failure of a computer to detect and address abnormal conditions.   | Instead of merely fixing date-related software problems, many companies are upgrading their business software to increase efficiency in manufacturing, distribution, and accounting.  |
| <p>Garbage or industrial waste build-up from a waste disposal site failure (for example, an incinerator that is not working properly).</p> <p>A safety or fire hazard from temporarily increased storage of flammable or reactive chemicals, either because of customer Y2K problems resulting in lack of pick-up, or indications of future supplier Y2K problems so extra materials are ordered to prevent a shortage.</p> <p>Excess or inadequate flow in streams or rivers resulting in adverse ecological impacts, including fish kills, caused by a dam's failure to ensure appropriate water flow.</p> <p>An undetected leak to groundwater from a tank, pipeline, landfill, or an industrial pond caused by a failed computerized leak-detection system.</p> | Shut-downs of potentially dangerous operations (after ensuring that enough employees are in place to address unforeseen contingencies and that start-up is unlikely to pose any problems) might be appropriate for needed maintenance or infrastructure upgrades.                     |

functioning and allow hazardous contaminants to be released into the air, water, and soil. Erroneous information generated by system malfunctions may cause waste disposal facility operators to take unsafe or improper steps. The possibilities are limitless and potentially catastrophic. With respect to oil spills, the risks may come from malfunctioning computerized systems that control the flow and transfer of oil in storage and distribution systems or at facilities that use large volumes of oil products.

The U.S. oil and gas industry is preparing itself for the kinds of problems described above. An August 1998 industry survey on Y2K readiness conducted by the Oil and Gas Working Group showed 76 percent of the respondents expecting to have their Y2K preparation completed by June 1999 and all expect to be done by December 1999. Much focus has gone into Supervisory Control Area Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems that use a combination of satellites and embedded chips to direct the flow of fuel at remote pipeline locations. Other areas of concern include the possibilities of incorrect financial transactions, oil field production outages, refinery and pipeline stoppages, and disruptions in product flow.

| DATE       | REASON FOR CONCERN  |
|------------|---|
| 01/01/1999 | Systems that look one year ahead may fail.  |
| 04/09/1999 | Special-use Julian date (99 <sup>th</sup> day of the 99 <sup>th</sup> year).  |
| 07/01/1999 | Many governments begin their fiscal year.   |
| 08/21/1999 | Global Positioning System date rollover affects military, transportation, Geographic Information System, and Automatic Vehicle Locator.                     |
| 09/09/1999 | Programmers use 9/9/99 as an end of file or infinity; will cause numerous problems (9 <sup>th</sup> day of 9 <sup>th</sup> month of 99 <sup>th</sup> year). |
| 10/01/1999 | Federal government and others begin fiscal year 2000.   |
| 12/31/1999 | End-of-year baseline (to be used in rollover scenario).   |
| 01/01/2000 | Date rollover will halt, confuse, or otherwise disrupt many systems and devices.  |
| 01/02/2000 | First 24-hour look-back period.   |
| 01/10/2000 | First data requiring full use of seven digits.  |
| 02/28/2000 | Day prior to Leap Year (to be used in rollover scenarios).  |
| 02/29/2000 | Many systems will not recognize Leap Year in 2000.  |
| 02/30/2000 | Invalid date. Test to ensure that Leap Year logic is functioning.   |
| 03/01/2000 | First valid date after Leap Year.   |
| 10/10/2000 | First date requiring full use of eight digits; may cause failures.  |
| 12/31/2000 | Some systems using Julian dates may not recognize the 366 <sup>th</sup> day of the Leap Year.   |
| 01/01/2001 | First date in 2001. Check rollover functions.   |

Concern over international oil production and shipping has led to the formation of the International Coordination Council (IOCC). IOCC is composed of the American Petroleum Institute's Y2K Task Force, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and other Federal agencies. A meeting in

November 1998 allowed input from government and industry as to how to assess the Y2K readiness of the oil and gas industry internationally. Information on international activity is being gathered throughout 1999, and IOCC is preparing scorecard of international readiness for public distribution.

EPA's approach to preparing for Y2K includes:

**Awareness:** EPA is spreading the word to its staff, owners and operators of treatment facilities, private companies, non-governmental groups, and the general public through fact sheets, newsletters, conferences, and other channels such as the Internet.

**Assessment:** Computerized equipment and equipment with embedded computer chips must be checked to determine what components may be vulnerable to the Y2K problem. Targeted equipment includes software, and control and process equipment, such as alarms, leak detection devices, underground storage tank monitors, security systems, and generators.

**Correction:** Potential problems that were identified in the assessment step must be corrected. Diagnostic programs may be available from various technology manufacturers. Computer specialists or special Y2K consultants may be needed to modify, repair, or replace systems or system components.

**Contingency plans:** All systems must have a back up, or contingency plan, to account for unforeseen complications that may arise if Y2K problems are not caught in the assessment and correction phases. Contingency plans should address how systems could be operated until computerization problems are resolved.

**Testing/Validation:** Controlled testing should be performed to make sure the Y2K problem is remedied.

**Implementation:** Readjusted systems need to be retested and revalidated so that they are ready for implementation.

EPA's Office of Emergency and Remedial Response, home to the Oil Program Center, is taking specific steps to insure that its equipment and personnel are prepared to respond to oil and hazardous waste spills that may occur as a result of the Y2K problem. These efforts include developing Y2K guidance for the regional offices, testing response equipment to make sure that it is not vulnerable to the Y2K bug, actively sharing Y2K information among regions, and coordinating its efforts with those of other federal agencies.

Although the Y2K problem is a very real and potentially disastrous threat, proper planning and control is helping EPA decrease this threat and further protect human health and the environment. For more information on EPA and Y2K, please visit the EPA Year 2000 Internet web site at [www.epa.gov/year2000/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/year2000/index.htm)

Y2K information about the oil and gas sector can be found at [www.ferc.fed.us/y2k/index.html](http://www.ferc.fed.us/y2k/index.html)

## News From Region 2

Recent enforcement actions in EPA Region 2 are helping to reduce the likelihood of future oil and hazardous materials releases. In New York, EPA fined Tonawanda Coke for SPCC violations. In Puerto Rico, EPA is proposing penalties at four facilities for oil spill, SPCC, and CERCLA violations related to Hurricane Georges. For more information on oil activities in Region 2 please contact Doug Kodama, U.S. EPA Facilities, Raritan Depot MS211, 2890 Woodbridge Avenue, Edison, NJ 08837-3679.

### SPCC Enforcement Improves Protective Measures at Tonawanda Coke

In January 1999 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fined Tonawanda Coke, a coke and coal tar manufacturer based in Tonawanda, New York, \$40,000 for violations of oil spill prevention sections of the federal Clean Water Act. EPA also confirmed that these violations have been remedied.

In April 1998, EPA issued a complaint to Tonawanda Coke charging that the company did not properly put a plan in place

to prevent oil spills at its 3875 River Road facility from reaching the nearby Niagara River. Tonawanda Coke's plan to deal with oil spills (a "Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC)" plan required by EPA) at that time stated that the company had several systems in place to divert uncontrolled oil leaks into retention ponds and containment areas -- effectively "catching" the oil before it reached the river. Upon inspection, however, EPA found that several of the protective measures outlined in the SPCC plan either were not implemented or did not work properly, in violation of the Clean Water Act. EPA also discovered that the Tonawanda Coke facility lacked other necessary spill prevention safety measures.

After EPA issued its formal complaint against Tonawanda Coke, the company amended its SPCC plan so that it now provides for increased protection against oil spills entering the environment. In a September 1998 inspection of the facility,



EPA confirmed that this new plan is fully implemented.

Tonawanda Coke Corporation employs 130 people and has annual sales of over \$22 million.

### **EPA Takes Steps to Ensure That Puerto Rico Facilities Are Better Prepared for next Hurricane**

Hurricanes can be devastating, but Puerto Rican companies can and should take steps to be better prepared for them, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). On February 8, to underscore this point, EPA issued complaints against four facilities for their failure to take appropriate action before and during Hurricane Georges. The Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, Lilly del Caribe, El Morro Corrugated Box Corporation and Caribbean Petroleum Refining face a combined total of \$266,750 in fines for violating emergency response rules. During



settlement negotiations in these type of cases, EPA often encourages companies to undertake projects called Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), which benefit communities put at risk due to environmental violations. Past SEPs have resulted in companies providing emergency response equipment and training to local health and safety authorities.

“Unfortunately, hurricanes are a fact of life in Puerto Rico,” said Jeanne M. Fox, EPA Region 2 Administrator. “We want these cases to serve as a wake-up call, reminding facilities that they can and must take all necessary steps to prevent environmental mishaps when hurricanes occur. It’s vital that facilities have emergency response plans and that employees are trained to carry them out.”

On September 21, four 2,000 pound cylinders of chlorine were released from PRASA’s facility in Jayuya, based on information provided by PRASA. Three cylinders have been recovered, one as recently as January 22, but one is still missing. Chlorine is an extremely hazardous substance, and if the cylinders had ruptured, they would pose an imminent threat to the environment and the community of Jayuya. PRASA did not notify emergency response officials, as required by law, of the loss of these

cylinders. EPA has proposed an \$82,500 penalty for PRASA’s violations.

At Lilly del Caribe in Mayaguez, nearly 50 drums, almost half of which contained hazardous substances, were swept away in flood waters on September 21 and 22. The facility did not report the loss of the drums to the appropriate authorities until October 2 and did not make a full effort to obtain a reliable inventory of drums on its property at the time of the loss. EPA is proposing a \$41,250 fine for failure to report the release.

At El Morro Corrugated Box in Vega Alta, Puerto Rico, 1,700 gallons of caustic soda spilled from a storage tank on or about September 21, 1998. According to El Morro, the spill was discovered on September 23 during a plant inspection. El Morro did not notify federal emergency response officials until the afternoon of October 2 and did not notify commonwealth officials until October 5. EPA is proposing a penalty of \$68,000 for El Morro’s failure to report the spill to federal, commonwealth and local officials.

More than 16,000 gallons of fuel oil leaked from a storage tank at the Caribbean Petroleum refining near Cataño, Puerto Rico on September 21. More than 800 gallons of the spilled



fuel reached the Las Lajas Creek, which is a tributary of the Cienaga Las Cucharillas, a sensitive marshland. The spill was discovered by 6:00 a.m. on the morning of September 22, but it was not reported to any emergency response officials until nearly 11:30 a.m. The spill is believed to have been caused by a drain valve that was not properly closed, which allowed oil to leak from the containment area surrounding the tank. EPA is proposing \$75,000 in penalties for Caribbean Petroleum's violations.

## Recent Oil Spill News

### Oil Tanker Crew Returns to US

The captain and chief engineer of a Liberian-registered tanker returned to California in January to face charges that they illegally dumped oil off of the San Mateo County coast. Their defense attorney contends that the voluntary return of the men to the United States confirms their innocence. The incident occurred in September when the tanker leaked oil into San Francisco Bay during refueling. The leak was repaired, but it is alleged that more oil was intentionally dumped after the ship left the bay.

### Mystery Spill Off East Coast

Reports of oiled birds off the east coast have lead officials to search for the cause of the spill. The first report of oiled birds came on January 14, 1999, from Charleston, South Carolina, where eight birds were collected. Between January 18 and 21, an additional 92 oiled birds were collected from Myrtle Beach to Little River in South Carolina. Later reports of oiled birds were received from Wilmington, North Carolina. By the weekend of January 23, reports of tar balls and oiled birds were received from as far north as Delaware. The source of the spill is still unclear.

### Tennessee Pipeline Spill

A pipeline owned by Colonial Pipeline Company ruptured on February 10, 1999, spilling thousands of gallons of high-sulphur fuel oil onto residences and into the Tennessee River in Knoxville, Tennessee. Ten homes were evacuated pending cleanup. It is estimated that 85,000 gallons of oil entered the river before the pipeline was closed. Booms were used to help contain the fuel, while vacuum trucks were used to pump oil from the river. Power was reduced at the Loudon Dam in order to slow the course of the river and facilitate cleanup.

### Freighter Grounds Twice in Oregon

The New Carissa, a 600-foot freighter owned by a Japanese company, ran aground at the entrance to Coos Bay in Oregon on February 4, 1999. The ship was carrying approximately 360,000 gallons of bunker fuel. Early assessment of the vessel revealed that it was leaking fuel. In order to reduce the potential for oil to spill from the vessel during impending storms, responders blasted the grounded ship with incendiary devices in an attempt to burn the fuel in the cargo holds. Approximately half of the fuel was burned off after the ship was reignited several times. The New Carissa spilled nearly 70,000 gallons of bunker fuel onto the Oregon shoreline.

On February 26, the 440-foot hull section of the ship was set to be pulled 200 miles out to sea and sunk in 6,000 feet of water. A tug boat had pulled the ship only 50 miles out to sea when strong winds and waves pulled the tow line free from the New Carissa. On March 3, the freighter ended up back on the beach, this time 85 miles to the north of Coos Bay in Waldport, near the entrance to the environmentally-sensitive Alsea Bay. The second attempt to tow the bow out to sea and sink it was successful.

Through March 4, \$10 million had been spent on the operation,

and at least 48 birds had been killed. Coos Bay and the Umpqua River estuary remain closed to commercial shellfish harvesting.

### **Atlanta Oil Spill**

Approximately 50 gallons of waste oil was discovered leaking into a storm drain in Atlanta, Georgia. The spill was found after a private citizen discovered 15 to 20 drums of waste on a road at the end of Atlanta Industrial Way and notified the EPA. The labeling on the drums indicated that the material was waste oil, which was confirmed by field testing. The oil entered the storm drain which led to a concrete-lined ditch containing a small amount of water and vegetation.

### **Homewood Diesel Spill**

In January 1999, an unknown quantity of diesel fuel was discovered flowing out of a storm sewer pipe and entering Shades Creek in Homewood, Alabama. An underflow dam was constructed where the pipe emptied into the creek, and cleanup activities were initiated. The source of a diesel spill remains unknown.

### **Valley Products Oil Spill**

Approximately 4800 gallons of #2 fuel oil was released from an above ground storage tank over the Christmas holiday weekend in Memphis, Tennessee. The leak occurred when a frozen

drain valve at the bottom of the tank thawed out and developed a crack. The fuel leaked into a properly-designed containment area, but then flowed out of the containment area due to either a faulty drainage valve, or negligence in ensuring the valve was closed. The fuel then flowed into an adjacent storm water sewer and into an unnamed tributary of Nonconnah Creek. The fuel reached the creek and had run 2.5 to 3.0 miles toward McKellar Lake. A boom was immediately deployed at the mouth of the Nonconnah Creek preventing fuel from reaching the lake. Recovery and cleaning of the spill then began. Responders informed the company that it was in violation of Oil Spill Prevention Regulations for not having a site-specific SPCC plan. EPA is investigating further for possible enforcement actions.

## **International Oil Spill Conference**

The International Oil Spill Conference was held in Seattle, Washington from March 8 to March 11, 1999. Participants presented papers and posters on topics covering area contingency planning, the use of modeling in oil spill preparedness and response activities, environmental impacts of spills, response tools and methods, and other topics. EPA co-sponsored

the conference with the U.S. Coast Guard, the International Maritime Organization, International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, and the American Petroleum Institute.

Several members of EPA's Oil Program Center staff and regional oil spill planning and response personnel participated in the conference to share their knowledge with other professionals and to learn from other's experiences. Staff members from EPA Headquarters, regional offices, the Office of Research and Development, and the Emergency Response Team presented 18 papers and posters. EPA staff presentations highlighted the agency's activities and mission in oil spill prevention, preparedness and response. Specific paper and poster topics presented by EPA staff included problem oil pits; specific problems with SPCC compliance for farms and ranches; approaches to area and sub-area contingency planning; chronic oil spills at automobile junkyards; improving the Emergency Response Notification System to allow better analysis of oil spills and response; testing and use of dispersants and bioremediation; air emissions and other environmental impacts of burning oil; and effects of non-petroleum oil spills.

In addition to sharing knowledge and information through poster sessions and presentations, EPA maintained booths in the conference exhibit hall to provide additional information about EPA oil spill activities in a informal setting.

The International Oil Spill Conference is a biennial event, and will be held again in March 2001 in Tampa, Florida.

## Oil Spill Program Managers Meeting

EPA Oil Spill Program managers met in Dallas, Texas on February 17 and 18, 1999 to reach consensus regarding *Results of Regional Oil Program Review* and to begin to develop a mission statement and requirements for a Core Oil Spill Program. The meeting was attended by regional oil program managers and senior members of the Oil Program Center staff from Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (OERR) headquarters.

### *Results of the Regional Oil Program Review*

Staff from the Oil Program Center at EPA headquarters recently visited Oil Spill Program staff in each of the regions and conducted

interviews addressing anticipated challenges over the next five years as well as regional innovations in response to these challenges.

Headquarters staff compiled the findings from these interviews in *The Results of the Oil Program Review*, which will serve as a background document that regional managers can use to brief division directors about the status and future plans for the EPA Oil Program. In addition to providing an overview of anticipated challenges and innovative responses, it presents conclusions, recommendations, and opportunities for action. The meeting afforded an opportunity for participants from all regions and headquarters to comment on and discuss the content of the document in order to assure that it accurately reflected the regional programs' concerns.

Regional innovations were an important topic at the meeting. Participants chose to highlight six notable innovations as examples of the many new approaches regional programs are adopting to improve performance, efficiency, and environmental protection.

- Region 9 is developing a *fuels management initiative* that covers the life cycle of oil from production to consumption. The program seeks to develop partnerships with all levels of government

and industry to improve coordination and identify priority issues when resolving problems.

- In Region 6, the *SPCC Expedited Enforcement Program* (SEEP) provides effective incentives for rapid correction of some non-compliance problems at facilities regulated by the Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) program. For relatively minor violations, facilities can avoid full-blown enforcement proceedings by paying smaller fines and correcting problems quickly. SEEP has made for quicker compliance at approximately 200 SPCC facilities in the region and helped achieve a 90 percent compliance rate in FY98.
- Several regions have focused Oil Program resources into *dedicated sections and teams* to increase consistency and management efficiency, and designation of individuals as coordinators of specific oil functions.



- *Pollution Removal Funding Authorization (PRFA)* agreements enhance State response capability, reduce the use of Emergency Rapid Response Services contracts, and allow for quicker cost documentation. Under PRFA agreements, federal OSCs provide oversight for the state or tribe responder and facilitate payment from the National Pollution Funds Center. These agreements are being used in Regions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 9.
- *Integrated area planning* and *sub-area planning* are two approaches area planning that improve the efficiency

of the area planning process and the effectiveness of the area plans. Integrated plans combine oil spill contingency planning with hazardous waste contingency planning where appropriate. Sub-area plans provide better focused responses for smaller areas within an EPA region.

- *Centralized cost documentation* dedicates a single individual to the oil cost recovery process. This allows regions to maintain full compliance with U.S. Coast Guard cost recovery requirements and get most cases through the pipeline in six months.

The group identified four areas for further discussion and development over the next several months: preparedness, cleanup, prevention, and program management.

#### STORY IDEAS?

The Oil Spill Program Update welcomes your story ideas and suggestions for future issues. If you have an item you would like to share with our readers, please contact Beatriz Oliveira at (703) 603-1229 (oliveira.beatriz@epa.gov) or Mark Keller at (703) 519-1096 (kellerm@dyncorp.com).

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